



Report to the Senate on the Status of Tactical (Nonstrategic) Nuclear Weapons Negotiations Pursuant to Subparagraph (a)(12)(B) of the Senate Resolution of Advice and Consent to Ratification of the New START Treaty

This report is transmitted pursuant to subparagraph (a)(12)(B) of the December 22, 2010, Senate Resolution of Advice and Consent to Ratification of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms ("New START"). This report covers the calendar year 2022.

On November 2, 2011, the President delegated to the Secretary of State the authority to submit the report specified in subparagraph (a)(12)(B) of the Resolution. On December 14, 2011, the Secretary of State delegated this authority to the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

Steps Taken by the United States to Conclude an Agreement to Address the Disparity between the Nonstrategic (Tactical) Nuclear Weapons Stockpiles of the Russian Federation and of the United States and to Secure and Reduce Tactical Nuclear Weapons in a Verifiable Manner, and the Reasons Why Such an Agreement Has Not Yet Been Concluded.

This annual report on nonstrategic nuclear weapons (NSNW) lays out the steps the United States has taken in 2022 toward these objectives.¹ Previous annual reports have detailed the steps the United States has taken in previous years.

1. U.S. Policy: President Biden pledged to keep the American people safe from nuclear threats by maintaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal and restoring U.S. leadership on arms control and nonproliferation. The United States took the first step toward making good on that pledge when it extended the New START Treaty with the Russian Federation for five years until February 5, 2026. When the United States extended the New START Treaty, Secretary of State Blinken stated: “President Biden has made clear that the New START Treaty extension is only the beginning of our efforts to address 21st century security challenges. The United States will use the time provided by a five-year extension of the New START Treaty to pursue with the Russian Federation, in consultation with Congress and U.S. allies and partners, arms control that addresses all of its nuclear weapons.” As the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) states, “The United States is ready to expeditiously

¹ Although the terms “nonstrategic” and “tactical” do not have legal definitions in this context, “nonstrategic” is sometimes used to refer to weapons that cannot travel intercontinental ranges. Weapons constrained by the New START Treaty can travel intercontinental ranges and are referred to as strategic, and are not subject to this report. The United States no longer uses the term “tactical nuclear weapons” because the United States does not envision any use of nuclear weapons to be tactical in character or effect. The United States also views the term nonstrategic as a misnomer as the use of a nuclear weapon would fundamentally change the nature of a conflict, but continues to use the term in the context of this report as the generally accepted term describing those weapons that do not travel intercontinental ranges.

negotiate a new arms control framework to replace New START when it expires in 2026, although negotiation requires a willing partner operating in good faith.” U.S. objectives for arms control post-New START include sustaining limits beyond 2026 on the Russian systems covered under the New START Treaty; limiting the new kinds of nuclear weapons that Russia is developing and deploying; and addressing all Russian nuclear weapons, including its nonstrategic and non-deployed weapons.

U.S. arms control policy is complementary to its maintenance of a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent to deter Russia from employing its nuclear weapons, including limited use. The 2022 NPR emphasizes that “detering Russian limited nuclear use in a regional conflict is a high U.S. and NATO priority.” To accomplish this objective, the NPR highlights ongoing U.S. efforts to “bolster the Triad with capabilities that further strengthen regional deterrence, such as F-35A dual-capable fighter aircraft (DCA) equipped with the B61-12 bomb; the W76-2 warhead; and the Long-Range Standoff (LRSO) weapon.” These capabilities are intended to help prevent miscalculation by Russia’s leadership on the consequences of nuclear employment on any scale, including nonstrategic nuclear arms.

2. Russian NSNW Forces.

- a. Current:** Like prior Administrations, the Biden Administration believes that the United States need not match nor mimic Russia’s NSNW stockpile. Its estimated stockpile of roughly 1,000 to 2,000 NSNW warheads includes warheads for air-to-surface missiles, gravity bombs, depth charges, torpedoes, anti-aircraft, anti-ship, anti-submarine, anti-

ballistic missile systems, and nuclear mines, as well as nuclear warheads for Russia's dual-capable ground-launched SS-26 Iskander missile systems.

b. Presidential Nuclear Initiatives (PNIs): In public speeches in 1991 and 1992, the presidents of the United States and the Soviet Union (and the Russian Federation or Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union) pledged, as a political commitment, to take separate but related steps regarding reductions in the number and deployment of their "tactical" nuclear weapons. These unilateral pledges are referred to as the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives. Despite Russian assertions to the contrary, the United States assesses that Russia is not adhering to all of the political commitments it made in the 1991-1992 PNIs.²

Russia has provided little information substantiating the full implementation of its PNI pledges. Russian officials have made a series of public statements that say either explicitly or implicitly that Russia has nuclear warheads for certain land-based NSNW/tactical missiles fielded by Russia's Ground Forces, particularly the SS-26 short-range ballistic

² The United States continues to monitor Russia's adherence to its PNI commitments, despite the lack of any legal compliance obligation on the part of Russia. To more appropriately account for the PNIs status as unilateral political commitments relating in large part to NSNW systems and to place U.S. efforts related to Russia's PNIs adherence within the larger context of U.S. efforts to control Russia's nonstrategic nuclear weapons, the United States is moving its voluntary reporting on Russia's PNIs adherence from the annual arms control Compliance Report to this report.

missile (SRBM). Russia's efforts to retain warheads for its NSNW ground forces are inconsistent with its PNI pledge to eliminate nuclear warheads for land-based tactical missiles. Since Russia had already committed under the INF Treaty to eliminate all ground-based missiles in the range of 500 km to 5,500 km, we consider Russia's PNI pledge to eliminate nuclear warheads for land-based "tactical" missiles to mean warheads for systems such as the SS-26 with a range under 500 km.

Russia's active stockpile has also continued to include nuclear mines, which Russia pledged to destroy in the PNIs.

Russia has admitted it has developed and fielded nuclear-capable versions of its ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs).

c. Future Russian Forces. While Russia today has fewer NSNW than in 1991, Russia continues to modernize its NSNW forces, which the United States estimates are likely to also grow, albeit by how much is uncertain. Meanwhile, the number of U.S. NSNW has declined by more than 90 percent since President George H.W. Bush announced the first set of U.S. PNIs in September 1991, and the active U.S. NSNW arsenal contains just one type: the B61 gravity bomb.

3. Why the United States Seeks to Address Russian NSNW. On October 27, 2022, the Administration publicly released its NPR, which describes U.S. nuclear strategy, policy, posture, and forces in support of the National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy. The review details U.S. concerns that

Russia could use its NSNW to try to win a war on its periphery or avoid defeat if it was in danger of losing a conventional war.

As the NPR notes, Russia's aggression against Ukraine underscores that nuclear dangers persist, and could grow, in an increasingly competitive and volatile geopolitical landscape. Russia's unprovoked and unlawful further invasion of Ukraine in 2022 is a stark reminder of nuclear risk in contemporary conflict. Russia has conducted its aggression against Ukraine under a nuclear shadow characterized by irresponsible saber-rattling, out-of-cycle nuclear exercises, and false narratives concerning the potential use of weapons of mass destruction.

Irresponsible Russian statements and actions raise the risk of deliberate or unintended escalation. We have and will continue to point out that any adversary employment of nuclear weapons, regardless of location or yield, would fundamentally alter the nature of a conflict, create the potential for uncontrolled escalation, and have strategic effects. Russia's leaders should have no doubt regarding the resolve of the United States to both resist nuclear coercion and act as a responsible nuclear power. Russian employment of nuclear weapons, no matter how limited, would carry grave consequences. President Biden noted on October 25, 2022, that Russia would be making an "incredibly serious mistake" if it used NSNW.

4. Arms Control to Address Russian NSNW. Beyond the critical role deterrence plays, arms control and nuclear nonproliferation are indispensable in further reducing nuclear dangers. Arms control can include legally binding agreements, politically binding arrangements, risk reduction measures, and

confidence and security building measures. Deterrence and arms control are mutually reinforcing tools for preserving stability, preventing aggression and escalation, and avoiding arms racing and nuclear war. As such, the United States places renewed emphasis on arms control, nuclear nonproliferation, and risk reduction.

5. Next Steps. The United States will work with a sense of urgency to reduce the danger of nuclear war, which would have grave consequences for the United States and the world. The United States will continue to raise in bilateral settings and publicly its concerns with Russia's failure to carry out its PNI pledge to eliminate all nuclear warheads for its ground-based tactical missiles and atomic demolition mines.

The United States is ready to expeditiously negotiate a new arms control framework to replace New START when it expires in 2026, although negotiation requires a willing partner operating in good faith. Russia is currently choosing war with Ukraine over diplomacy. The United States also actively seeks to resume inspection activities under the New START Treaty after Russia's claimed "temporary exemption" of all its treaty facilities from such activities beginning in August 2022. Full implementation of the New START Treaty increases transparency, predictability, stability, and security, and is a foundation upon which follow-on arrangements or a framework can be built.

Russia continues to repeat its well-worn preconditions for negotiations on NSNW: that the United States first remove its forward-based nuclear weapons from NATO Allied territory in Europe, dismantle associated U.S. infrastructure,

and eliminate its training of NATO Allies related to those weapons. As has been made clear to Russia for decades, these preconditions are unacceptable to the United States and NATO.

6. Coordination with Allies. The U.S. extended nuclear deterrence commitment to allies remains rock solid. Any changes in NATO's nuclear posture will be taken only after a thorough review within—and decision by—the Alliance. The United States is committed to consulting closely with NATO Allies and our allies in the Indo-Pacific about the security challenges posed by Russia's NSNW and how they should be addressed.

7. Conclusion. The Administration shares the longstanding bipartisan interest in addressing Russia's NSNW. Russian willingness to engage will likely be limited by how important Moscow views such weapons to its national security. Russia's reliance on nuclear weapons in its military strategy may become even stronger in light of the substantial conventional losses and setbacks inflicted on Russian military forces in Ukraine. Nonetheless, the Administration remains committed to seeking arms control that addresses Russia's NSNW and will continue working toward that objective as conditions permit, including having a willing partner prepared to act in good faith.